

Smarter Balanced & Proactive Admissions

Board of Regents Policy 2:3 System Undergraduate Admissions does not provide the policy framework that would allow for the admission of high school students just based on their performance on the Smarter Balanced assessment test administered to all South Dakota students at the conclusion of the 11th grade. To address this issue, revisions have been made to the current admission policy to provide a mechanism for institutional admission personnel to process student applications once they arrive without having to evaluate students against the three other criteria that are currently used to determine admission.

Background on Smarter Balanced Student Performance

Currently, student ACT/SAT scores are used as the primary standardized measure for both admission and student placement, drawing from validity studies developed by ACT, Inc. During the April 2015 Board of Regents meeting, Smarter Balanced scores were adopted into the system placement matrix and have been used for the past year as an additional measure for determining student eligibility for credit bearing math and English courses. However, since the Smarter Balanced examination was implemented three years ago, questions have surfaced regarding the relationship student performance on this measure have with students' future postsecondary success. In an attempt to evaluate the relationship, data available through the Board of Regents Matriculation Dashboard were used to compare student first year performance and credit taking behaviors once they entered the Regental system the year following high school graduation. For reference, there were 8,765 students in 2015-16 high school graduate data file, and a process was employed to match these graduates against the Regental system's 2016FA census date extract (on first name, last name, and date of birth), resulting in 2,632 students. The data depicted below represents the performance outcomes for this student population.

Table 1 (math) and Table 2 (reading) show the relationship between Smarter Balanced score ranges and student cumulative GPA during the first academic year. Specifically, the tables show the following indicators: student count ("fa" column), in-system retention into 2017SP ("sp" column"), mean completed credits during FY2017 ("cmplcred" column), and mean system grade point average during FY2017 ("gpa" column). Overall, as student performance on both indicators increases, their average GPA also increased with those students earning a 3 or higher on the assessment achieving an average GPA of 2.7 or higher when considering both Math and English scores.

Table 1
Student Outcomes by Smarter Balanced Math Level

Math	N(fa)	mean(sp)	mean(cmplcred)	mean(gpa)
Level 1	326	83.74	18.10	2.19
Level 2	682	89.00	22.65	2.55
Level 3	946	94.08	26.64	2.98
Level 4	441	96.37	28.69	3.33
Total	2,395	91.65	24.72	2.82

Table 2
Student Outcomes by Smarter Balanced Reading Level

Read	N(fa)	mean(sp)	mean(cmplcred)	mean(gpa)
Level 1	78	91.03	18.44	2.18
Level 2	398	87.69	20.28	2.34
Level 3	1,069	89.52	24.13	2.71
Level 4	854	96.14	28.07	3.23
Total	2,399	91.62	24.71	2.82

Table 3 and 4 below provide an overview of this same set of Smarter Balanced benchmarks when compared against student performance on the ACT. Specifically, students who earned advanced on the examination had an average ACT score that was 26 or greater. Some greater variability existed for those that scored in the proficient range.

Table 3
Student Outcomes by Smarter Balanced Math Level

Math	N(fa)	mean(sp)	mean(cmpl~d)	mean(gpa)	mean(act)
Level 1	326	83.74	18.10	2.19	18.19
Level 2	682	89.00	22.65	2.55	20.45
Level 3	946	94.08	26.64	2.98	23.83
Level 4	441	96.37	28.69	3.33	27.60
Total	2,395	91.65	24.72	2.82	22.82

Table 4
Student Outcomes by Smarter Balanced Reading Level

Read	N(fa)	mean(sp)	mean(cmpl~d)	mean(gpa)	mean(act)
Level 1	78	91.03	18.44	2.18	17.44
Level 2	398	87.69	20.28	2.34	18.82
Level 3	1,069	89.52	24.13	2.71	21.88
Level 4	854	96.14	28.07	3.23	26.30
Total	2,399	91.62	24.71	2.82	22.82

Tables 5-8 display data for the same core indicators shown above, but segment the results by both math *and* reading. Overall there does not appear to be a strong relationship between student Smarter Balanced performance and fall to spring retention. However, the relationships look stronger in Tables 6 and 7, indicating that students scoring the upper end of both distributions generally produce positive first-year outcomes.

Table 5
Spring 2017 In-System Retention by Math-Reading Levels

Math	Read				Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Level 1	90.00 50	82.55 149	81.20 117	100.00 9	83.69 325
Level 2	95.65 23	89.50 181	87.34 387	93.41 91	89.00 682
Level 3	100.00 4	93.75 64	91.99 462	96.39 415	94.07 945
Level 4		100.00 4	96.04 101	96.43 336	96.37 441
Total	92.21 77	87.69 398	89.50 1,067	96.12 851	91.64 2,393

Table 6
FY2017 System Completed Credits by Math-Reading Levels

Math	Read				Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Level 1	16.44 50	16.98 149	19.54 117	28.89 9	18.15 325
Level 2	21.87 23	20.98 181	22.71 387	25.96 91	22.65 682
Level 3	27.00 4	25.30 64	25.77 462	27.82 415	26.64 945
Level 4		31.25 4	27.56 101	29.00 336	28.69 441
Total	18.61 77	20.28 398	24.15 1,067	28.10 851	24.73 2,393

Table 7
FY2017 System Grade Point Average by Math-Reading Levels

Math	Read				Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Level 1	2.01 50	2.10 149	2.32 117	3.21 9	2.20 325
Level 2	2.55 23	2.39 181	2.55 387	2.87 91	2.55 682
Level 3	2.62 4	2.65 64	2.86 462	3.18 415	2.98 945
Level 4		3.33 4	3.12 101	3.40 336	3.33 441
Total	2.20 77	2.34 398	2.71 1,067	3.23 851	2.82 2,393

Table 8
Mean ACT Composite Score by Math-Reading Levels

Math	Read				Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Level 1	16.4	17.7	19.3	21.2	18.2
	50	149	117	9	325
Level 2	18.6	18.9	20.6	23.5	20.4
	23	181	387	91	682
Level 3	23.3	20.9	22.9	25.3	23.8
	4	64	462	415	945
Level 4		24.5	25.2	28.4	27.6
		4	101	336	441
Total	17.4	18.8	21.9	26.3	22.8
	77	398	1,067	851	2,393